

Message Text

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70

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7459

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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BANGKOK FOR RED

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS EAID EAGR TW US

SUBJECT: ASIAN VEGETABLE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
CENTER (AVRDC)

REF: STATE 240324

1. SUMMARY. WE HAVE DISCUSSED AVRDC PROGRAM AND FINANCING WITH AVRDC BOARD CHAIRMAN (DR. T.H. SHEN); JOINT COMMISSION ON RURAL RECONSTRUCTION (JCRR) CHAIRMAN (DR. ROBERT C.T. LEE); AND WITH AVRDC DIRECTOR (DR. JAMES C. MOOMAW). DURING VISIT TO AVRDC ON OCTOBER 20, EMBASSY OFFICER ALSO HAD OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE CENTER'S ACTIVITIES AT FIRST HAND AND TO DISCUSS RESEARCH AND TRAINING PROGRAMS WITH CENTER'S PROFESSIONAL STAFF. ON BASIS THESE TALKS AND OBSERVATIONS, EMBASSY HAS REINFORCED ITS VIEW THAT AVRDC IS EFFICIENTLY MANAGED BY A HIGHLY CAPABLE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AND THAT IT IS CARRYING OUT A USEFUL AND POTENTIALLY BENEFICIAL PROGRAM UNDER
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DIRECTION OF COMPETENT AND ENTHUSIASTIC SCIENTIFIC STAFF. END

SUMMARY.

2. WITH MODERN WELL-EQUIPPED LABORATORIES AND SUPPORTING FACILITIES AS WELL AS EXTENSIVE EXPERIMENTAL FIELDS, AVRDC IS MOST ADVANCED FACILITY OF ITS KIND IN ASIA. FOR THE PRESENT, THE CENTER'S ACTIVITIES ARE CONCENTRATED ON SIX VEGETABLE CROPS: MUNG BEANS, SOYBEANS, TOMATOES, WHITE POTATOES, SWEET POTATOES AND CHINESE CABBAGE. NUMBER OF CROPS RECEIVING ATTENTION HAS BEEN DELIBERATELY KEPT SMALL ON PREMIS THAT WITH LIMITED MEANS CONCENTRATION OF EFFORTS IS MORE LIKELY TO YIELD EARLY RESULTS THAN BROADER-SCALE PROGRAM. ALTHOUGH NO DRAMATIC BREAKTHROUGHS HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED DURING FIRST THREE YEARS OF OPERATION (RESEARCH WORK WAS BEGUN IN NOVEMBER 1972), AVRDC NEVERTHELESS IS MAKING GOOD PROGRESS TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF IMPROVED VARIETIES OF THE SIX VEGETABLES RECEIVING ATTENTION.

3. IN ADDITION TO ITS RESEARCH PROGRAM, AVRDC HAS RECENTLY INITIATED A RESIDENT TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SCIENTISTS, 3/53,SION WORKERS AND PRODUCTION SPECIALISTS FROM OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES. UNDER THIS PROGRAM, TRAINING IS PROVIDED FOR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN JUST BEGINNING THEIR CAREERS IN CROP RESEARCH AND WHO ARE INVOLVED WITH VEGETABLE PRODUCTION IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. AVRDC ALSO PROVIDES FACILITIES FOR EXPERIENCED SCIENTISTS WHO WISH TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THE MOST ADVANCED RESEARCH TECHNIQUES AND INFORMATION REGARDING VEGETABLE IMPROVEMENT. THE CENTER ALSO MAINTAINS A PROGRAM FOR TRAINING INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS WITH SPECIAL INTERESTS OR REQUIREMENTS. IN 1976, AVRDC PLANS TO OFFER A NEW PROGRAM INVOLVING TRAINING OF VEGETABLE PRODUCTION SPECIALISTS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAINING AND SUPERVISING EXTENSION WORKERS, FARM MANAGERS AND EDUCATORS.

4. CONCERNING FINANCIAL SUPPORT BY OTHER COUNTRIES FOR THE SECON FIVE-YEAR PERIOD (1976-80), AVRDC CONSIDERS THAT U.S. AND KOREA ARE FIRMLY COMMITTED FOR \$600,000 AND \$75,000 PER YEAR, RESPECTIVELY. OFFICIALS ALSO ARE CONFIDENT THAT JAPAN AND PHILIPPINES WILL CONTINUE THEIR SUPPORT AT LEAST AT PRESENT LEVELS (\$75,000 YEARLY), ALTHOUGH NEITHER CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNMENT HAS FORMALLY EXPRESSED ITS INTENTIONS. NOTWITHSTANDING STATEMENT IN LAST SENTENCE PARA 2 REFTTEL, ONLY COUNTRY WHOSE CONTINUED SUPPORT IS IN SERIOUS DOUBT IS THAILAND, WHICH ALSO HAS BEEN CONTRIBUTING \$75,000 PER YEAR.

5. IN SUMMARY, IT IS REASONABLY CERTAIN THAT AVRDC CAN COUNT ON CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM MAJOR PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES. THE LEVEL OF SUCH SUPPORT AS CURRENTLY

PROJECTED, HOWEVER, WILL LEAVE AVRDC CONSIDERABLY SHORT OF ATTAINING ITS 1976-80 BUDGET OF \$10.8 MILLION. UNDER MOST OPTIMISTIC ASSUMPTIONS, INCLUDING GROC GUARANTEED CONTRIBUTION OF UP TO 49 PERCENT OF TOTAL, AVRDC'S BUDGET (NOT INCLUDING ADB FINANCING OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES) FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS CAN BE CONSIDERED AT PRESENT TO BE ONLY ABOUT 87 PERCENT SUBSCRIBED, AS FOLLOWS (IN THOUSAND DOLLARS): U.S. 3,000; ROC 5,292; JAPAN 375, KOREA 375; AND PHILIPPINES 375, FOR TOTAL OF 9,417.

6. FROM FOREGOING IT IS CLEAR THAT FURTHER EFFORTS WILL NEED TO BE EXERTED TO ASSURE ADEQUATE FINANCING FOR AVRDC OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS. IN THIS RESPECT JAPAN IS A KEY COUNTRY. IF JAPAN CAN BE CONVINCED TO INCREASE ITS CONTRIBUTION, OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES MIGHT BE WILLING TO FOLLOW SUIT; IF JAPAN DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE MORE, THERE IS NO HOPE THAT OTHER ASIAN PARTICIPANTS WILL INCREASE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.

7. THERE IS SOME INDICATION THAT ANOTHER REGIONAL COUNTRY-- INDONESIA--IS INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN AVRDC, PROVIDED A POLITICALLY EXPEDIENT WAY CAN BE FOUND TO DO SO. DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER WHETHER USG COULD BE HELPFUL IN THIS REGARD, AND ALSO WHETHER INFLUENCE COULD BE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON JAPAN WITH VIEW TO GAINING AN INCREASE IN ITS CONTRIBUTION TO AVRDC.

8. IN ANSWER TO LAST QUESTION IN PARA 1 REFTTEL, EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE GROC WOULD BE PREPARED TO FUND MORE THAN 49 PERCENT OF AVRDC'S BUDGET AS LONG AS THE INSTITUTION RETAINS ITS INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER. IF OTHER COUNTRIES SHOULD DIMINISH THEIR SUPPORT, THE CENTER'S ACTIVITIES WOULD BE CORRESPONDINGLY DIMINISHED; IF OUTSIDE SUPPORT IS WITHDRAWN, THE CENTER PROBABLY WOULD

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EITHER BE CONVERTED TO A STRICTLY NATIONAL INSTITUTION, WITH NATIONAL OBJECTIVES, OR WOULD CEASE TO EXIST.

9. EMBASSY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN COMMENTS OF INFO ADDRESSEES AS TO THEIR HOST GOVERNMENTS' CURRENT ATTITUDE AND INTENTIONS REGARDING CONTINUED SUPPORT OF AVRDC.
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